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ABSTRACT

This publication, a panel presentation of four papers, contains: (1) "The Historical Dimension--Implications for Excellence" (David B. Ripley), which presents a partial review of the history of education literature, where educators are now, and where they should be in the future; (2) "Philosophical Research in Education--Implications for Excellence" (Byron F. Radebaugh), which gives an overview of major philosophical research contributions; (3) "The Contribution of Sociological Research to Educational Excellence" (Wilma Miranda), which offers a brief look at sociological research efforts; and (4) "Progress toward Excellence in the Development of Educational Research and Evaluation Methods and Techniques" (Joseph R. Ellis), which presents nine areas of progress in educational research/evaluation and several recommendations for future efforts. (JMK)

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1984 - AMERICAN EDUCATION IN PERSPECTIVE - A CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

A DISCUSSION PANEL PRESENTATION

"WHAT ARE THE MAJOR RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL, AND RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN EDUCATION DURING THE PAST THIRTY-FIVE YEARS?"

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Presenters:

Dr. David B. Ripley
Dr. Byron F. Radebaugh
Dr. Wilma Miranda
Dr. Joseph R. Ellis

January 30, 1984
Poydras Room
Sheraton New Orleans Hotel
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THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION--IMPLICATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE

by David B. Ripley

This essay is a partial review of the history of education literature and is intended to review the thinking in the field today, of where we are and where we ought to be in the next decade in history and education. Historians, as everybody knows, have a strong tendency to revise, to continually reinterpret and reanalyze the past. In the field of education many of us are just getting used to the idea that everything we learned in graduate school--about how the Great American Public School had opened the door of opportunity to all--was at best a romantic myth and at worst a deliberate lie. Now it appears that various ethnic groups and minorities were and still are defining their world without the influence of the public school, perhaps even rejecting what it represented in opportunity and success and were looking to other institutions, to other means, and in other directions. As a result of these new interpretations of what the school has meant and how it has related to other institutions in our society, we may not only come to understand our history better, but will be led to make more informed decisions in the future.

In the three sections below are discussed institutional history, biographic study, and quantitative history. Several recent or provocative works pertinent to each section are listed in the references. An attempt is made to discuss and draw insights in regard to the current state and potential implications for excellence of work in each section.

Institutional History. It is the strength of history to study change. This strength provides the essential tool for shaping the language and framework that we bring to the study of institutions. Historians, if they are to be successful, ought to think of all institutions as dependent phenomena, communities of discourse whose control operates within demarcated life spans. In depicting the changes of social institutions one of the greatest conceptual dangers is that of bipolarism, of contrasting an institution under study with another for dramatic clarity rather than to illuminate the nature of the change itself. One can substitute correct historical distinctions for errant bipolar distinctions by taking the task of analysis to be the interpretation of how similar and how different institutions have actually been over time. It is essential to set a range of institutional

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experiences in context and pursue the network over several generations thereby making institutional history the focal point for probing far broader intellectual and cultural changes. Without such care, institutional history becomes dry in taste and empty of meaning. Mattingly's and McLachlan's works can be particularly insightful as we attempt to apply these criteria to future efforts (1).

Biographic Study. Biography, like other historical writing, is an ancient but ever varying discipline. The current agenda for biography in educational history should concentrate on two activities: 1) better incorporating biographical documents and perspectives into historical syntheses; and 2) constructing life histories around the activities of education. We should recognize that the subjective dimensions of biography add substance and proportion to history's story. Biographical data assist in getting inside the skin of the participant, to know how an era was experienced, and specifically, how people conceived of their education and what educated them. Life-history data and individual and collective biography offer corroborative or corrective detail. Like other kinds of evidence, biographies test theories. There is no lack of rich life documents from which to build adequate biographies. Subjects for individual and collective biography abound: in local elites who supported school builders, influential figures in public higher education, activists in teachers' organizations, clerical and lay leaders in parochial school systems, public school students and faculty, and founders of early female seminaries. These subjects must be creatively synthesized into history; we need disciplined examinations of teaching and learning in actual lives. We need biography that satisfies both the researcher's demand for information and the artist's demand for illumination, and when this is achieved our future decisions can be enlightened considerably (2).

Quantitative History. Assessments of the state of the art in quantitative educational history are optimistic. There has been a remarkable increase in both the quality and amount of research in the field. The "sometime" isolation of educational historians has evanesced as scholars from other disciplines have contributed to educational studies and as those trained in the education field have reached out to connect their work to broader social and economic theory. There is excitement as questions long thought settled are reexamined and as entirely new interpretations of our past are explored. Two prime areas for potential research involve the politics of education and school attendance. Who controlled, who reformed, who benefited from education? How were these influenced by social class, ethnicity, economic power, or even place of residence? Where data are available, quantitative treatment allows for comparisons, insights, and explanations previously limited to singularities. New understandings of literacy, the social origins of teachers,

and collective biographies are areas currently being pursued (3).

Conclusion. Where does this leave us? In every sub-category of educational history new perceptions, new theories, new strategies are leading to fuller and more adequate history. What we who are historians or we who hope to use the products of educational history must do is be alert and critical. When we are dealing with reality in terms of concrete human experience--as surely we must do in respect to both history and education--the most dangerous thing we can do is be superficial. That is, to falsify our history by the indiscriminate use of theories that strip from real persons and events all the numberless connections and particulars that we encounter in actual experience. What we must have are theories which come from experience rather than are merely **about** experience. Adequate educational thinking, because it must be bound to the wholeness of human life, cannot put aside the complexity of thought forms that parallel that complexity and remain either meaningful or useful. We need a history which takes full account, not simply of trends and forces, but of particular events and places and persons, including their thoughts, words, and deeds. These are the expression of their beliefs and values. We need such a history to free us from the delusion of past perspective and to make possible a genuinely different future. As we face the exciting educational possibilities of the present, it is comforting to recognize the conjunction of new historical insights and current demands upon education. The union affords the possibility of not just more of the same. Informed current actions can fulfill the dream of an educated people. "We the people" can for the first time in history mean all the people.

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January, 1984

PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH IN EDUCATION--IMPLICATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE

by Byron F. Radebaugh

George Orwell came up with the title of his book **Nineteen Eighty-Four** by transposing the last two numbers in the year 1948. This date is the beginning general time parameter for this essay.

In the early 1940s, philosophy of education concerned itself with the aims and outcomes the educative process should strive to realize. The role of the educational philosopher was to evaluate existing and proposed aims by analyzing them with reference to more remote purposes and assumptions that constituted his basic philosophy. He also derived the aims that he would set up for the schools from this basic philosophy. In both of these activities his method was that of critical thinking. He may utilize the findings of science and his own observations, but his method was considered to be **subjective** (italics added) in comparison with that of the scientist. Hence, he could not be regarded as a research worker in the usual sense, but this does not mean that his product should not be recognized as scholarly and deserving of respect. In fact, the philosopher would maintain that his conclusions merit equal place with the findings of science and logically stand antecedent to them (Martz, 1941).

Prior to 1941, the term "a philosophy of education" was often used to refer to a set of beliefs about life and schooling. However, the 1941 and 1955 yearbooks of **National Society for the Study of Education** reflected the view that philosophy of education should be a field of scholarly inquiry, writing, and teaching. It was more than being thoughtful about education and more than the proverbial wisdom (Broudy, 1981).

In 1950, Brubacher was willing to state that all research--scientific, historical, or philosophic--consists in inquiry leading to more and more substantially grounded meanings. He suggested that while the scientist might determine as a matter of fact what aims or values are actually held in a school or a community or what the outcome of pursuing certain aims or values under given conditions is likely to be, he possesses no technique for determining what **should be** (italics added) the aims or values of education

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(Brubacher quoting Kilpatrick, 1950). This latter is a problem which is particularly appropriate to philosophical inquiry (Brubacher, 1950).

The 1955 Committee (NSSE) still believed that the best way to get an overall view of the problems of men and education was to examine them through the stencil or lens of a philosophical system or school or ism (Broudy, 1981). Also, during the fifties there was much heated debate among philosophers of education as to whether a value "ought" could be deduced from a factual "is," and whether from a theory about the good in general, prescriptions for educational practice could be determined. In general, the tide of philosophical argument and sentiment was negative (Broudy, 1981). For these reasons, and others, philosophic research (scholarship) in education shifted away from the isms approach and focused more attention to the logical and linguistic analysis of educational concepts and problems (Broudy, 1981). It seems fair to say, then, that philosophic research in education since 1948 has taken different forms which are related to the particular view of philosophy that is assumed and there has been a change in emphasis from a system building approach to relating philosophy and education (Idealism, Realism, Experimentalism, Existentialism) to an analysis of the meanings and relationships of ideas (the analysis of language).

Inquiry may attempt to gain rigid control of each variable to ascertain its exact effect on the educational outcome. Most educational situations, however, contain so many variables so complexly intertwined that it is next to impossible to isolate each variable and trace out its peculiar bearing on the total situation. Consequently, if inquiry by rigid control of variables is to go forward, research must usually confine its attention to a very limited number of variables carefully selected because they lend themselves to isolation and control. Even the precise meaning of each variable will not be established as a matter of research unless on repetition of the same operation, especially by other competent investigators, the same outcome recurs. Inquiry carried on under such carefully controlled circumstances usually goes by the name of scientific research. ... On the other hand, inquiry may not be content with meanings of such limited scope. It may prefer to know the meaning of the total situation that is, the total complex of variables. Here the method of inquiry will be, not scrupulously to exclude what cannot be controlled, but scrupulously to include every variable which immediately or remotely bears on the situation. Having gathered these variables together, the investigator in quest of **inclusive meanings** (italics added) will endeavor to arrange them according to some over-all order, consistency, or unity. He will try to organize them into some integration or synthesis. Investigation resulting in inclusive meanings, as over

against the limited meanings of science, justly carries the title **philosophical research** (italics added) (Brubacher, 1950). It is my view that in the recent past, philosophical research in education, in the form of "analysis," has, like science, tended to focus on meanings of limited scope, and this has been at the sacrifice of more inclusive meanings. It has also led to a hiatus between what the educational practioner expected from the professional philosopher of education and what was received.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS--PHILOSOPHICAL "ANALYSIS"

What "analysis" does in the field of education is to examine the concepts that are central to its theory and practice. It attempts to be critical of educational concepts both singly and in relation to one another and its goal is helping students learn to be critical (Pratte, 1981). Some examples are:

**The concept of knowledge.* Research leading to the distinctions "knowing that" (factual knowledge), "knowing how to" (performative knowledge), "knowing to" (that it is good to do something) has been helpful (Pratte, 1981). This has been useful to teachers in formulating defensible instructional objectives and goals.

**The concept of teaching.* Research leading to the distinction between the task/achievement sense of the verb "to teach" has been helpful. Teaching and learning are logically independent concepts, for we can have teaching without learning and learning without teaching (Pratte, 1981). The notion that "teaching" refers to "ways of making something known to others" and minimally involves a TEACHER (with intent to teach someone something), a SUBJECT MATTER (something to be taught), a STUDENT (someone to be taught), so that a GOOD END results (Pratte, 1981). This has been helpful to teachers in clarifying their teaching role. It has also been useful in attempts to evaluate teaching.

**The concept education.* Research leading to the development of four basic criteria of performance to be associated with any activity taken to be a case of "education", based in part on the work of R. S. Peters, has also been helpful. Teachers should make sure they (1) teach knowledge and skills which are considered by their particular society to be genuinely worthwhile to the present and future development of the learner, (2) seek always to expand or broaden the degree of cognitive (intllectual) and affective (valuational and emotional) insight and understanding of the learner, (3) seek always to try to help their students to enjoy (or to learn to "appreciate") what they are learning, and (4) enable their students to perceive how what they learn relates to the present concerns and future possibilities of other persons as well as themselves (Schultz, 1977). This

has helped teachers to better understand the entire educative process.

**Education is directive.* Research leading to the conclusion that education is necessarily directive and is, therefore, a moral as well as a scientific undertaking. This has helped teachers realize the importance of personal as well professional values and to consider carefully the values that are operative in the eduational context.

**Educational slogans.* Research leading to a sustained and critical examination of educational slogans such as "equality of educational opportunity," the concept of "needs," the concept of "adjustment," and the concept of "indoctrination" (Pratte, 1981). This has helped teachers think more clearly about educational issues.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS--EXISTENTIAL AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL

**Non-cognitive experience.* Research leading to the development of the view that there is an important part of human experience that is non-cognitive (aesthetic). This has helped teachers realize that the classroom itself can be transformed into an aesthetic experience for both students and teachers.

**Accurate descriptions of educational phenomena.* Research leading to the development of the conviction that it is very important to obtain accurate descriptions of educational phenomena. This has helped teachers become aware of the importance of observing the reactions of students as they are being taught and taking these reactions into account in their teaching.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS--JOHN DEWEY (EXPERIMENTALISM)

**Aesthetic experience* Research leading to the awareness that aesthetic experience is really the "summum bonum" and that cognitive experience is an important means to that end. This has helped teachers realize that feelings and emotions play an important part in life and education.

**"Religious" experience.* Research leading to an awareness that "religious" experience as distinct from "religion" is important. This has helped teachers become aware that certain human experiences can be prized and that these experiences may come from many different sources.

**Subject matter.* Research leading to the conclusion that teachers must know their subject matters almost as experts know them, know the individual children in the classroom, and in terms of their backgrolunds in the community occupations and life (Burnett, 1981). This has

helped teachers understand the importance of continued personal and professional educational development. (See Note 1).

*Democracy and education. Research leading to an awareness that democracy and education are intimately related and that the method of inquiry or intelligence is the means for achieving both. This has helped teachers formulate as a desirable educational objective that of attempting to help students learn how to think critically and reflectively and to understand the importance of education in a democratic society. (See Note 2).

*Critics of Experimentalism. Research leading to the conclusion that whatever is happening adversely in American educational practice today cannot be charged to John Dewey and his purported followers because this philosophy has not been the dominant one in the last thirty-five years (Burnett, 1981). This has helped teachers become aware that this philosophy may provide important ideas useful in their teaching and that these ideas probably have not been tried out in practice on a very extensive scale.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS--IDEALISM AND REALISM "ESSENTIALISM"

*The Paideia Proposal. Research leading to the development of The Paideia Proposal and other scholarly work by Mortimer J. Adler which has led to the awareness that the Humanities, critical thinking, and critical discussion are important. This has helped teachers and others realize that education should be more than vocational training.

*The Story of Civilization. Research leading to the many volumes published by Will and Ariel Durant entitled "The Story of Civilization" has helped teachers and others develop a broader understanding of our global civilization.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS--POLICY STUDIES

*Public policy and public virtue. Research leading to an awareness that the study of public policy is the study of public virtue and its spread, both in the community and in its leaders; the formation and spread of virtue and the nature of good and evil are and always have been central problems in the philosophical tradition; they become serious problems for the philosophy of education; and the major benefit resulting from philosophers of education becoming involved in policy formation may be its contribution to the improvement of philosophy (Green, 1981).

SUMMARY

It is my view that the major research accomplishments in the philosophical foundations of education during the past thirty-five years have been (1) keeping alive the idea that a scientific attitude by itself is inadequate, (2) keeping alive the awareness that education is necessarily directive ...that it is the deliberate attempt to influence human conduct or behavior, and this fact makes education a moral as well as scientific undertaking, (3) keeping alive the notion that democracy is more than a form of government, or a method of settling differences, but is in addition a way of living characterized by certain basic values, (4) continuing the development and understanding of the philosophy of John Dewey, (5) analyzing and clarifying the meanings of important educational concepts, (6) keeping alive the awareness that the Humanities, critical thinking and discussion are important in a democracy, and (7) becoming aware that involvemnt in policy making is also important.

Many additional instances of the accomplishments of philosophical research in education could be given, but time and space demand that this essay end.

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Note 1. It is interesting in this regard that Lawrence Cremin (1978) stated that he thinks the time has come to require the doctorate for all who seek entry into the educating professions.

Note 2. There is some evidence that scholarship (research) related to John Dewey has increased in both quantity and quality during the past thirty-five years.

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January, 1984

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

by Wilma Miranda

Educational sociologists in the twentieth century have struggled to identify the characteristics of the many subcultures represented in the nation's schools. Their work has generally been closely linked to that of learning psychologists whose efforts also focused on clarifying the nature of the learner. On the surface this is sensible. Excellence in teaching should surely be served by a fuller understanding of the sociological characteristics of our students. By the 1960's however, there appeared to be a shift in the kinds of questions that educational sociologists were asking. The assumption that accumulation of sociological data would yeild a knowledge base that would inform teaching practice was shaken. In all areas of educational study--psychology, history, philosophy, curriculum theory--the fundamental conviction that we could develop a true science of education lost its vigor. The student rebellions in high schools and colleges, the stubborn persistence of educational racism, the growing unrest of America's teachers, indicated that important features of social reality had been missed by sociologists of education. How could this have happened? Where were the blind spots in the research? Why had sociological analysis failed to offer the needed insights into the social problems facing students and educators?

The response to this loss of confidence was to look for new methods of research and even more importantly, to formulate new questions. Howard Becker, for example, began asking questions about what it was like to try to get ahead as a school teacher in the city of Chicago. What influenced career patterns? What counted as a prestigious position? Becker was one of the most influential of the sociologists arguing for ethnographic studies in education. In these studies we try to get "inside" the institution to understand the life-world of real teachers as they conduct their day to day business. The research techiques were borrowed from anthropology's field studies and from methods in social psychology. A fine example of this contribution is Dan Lortie's, **Schoolteacher**, in which he investigates how teachers express dilemmas in their professional lives. A particularly illuminating study in the book is titled, "The Logic of Teacher Complaints." Ethnographic study has grown enormously and was extended to include all people in the

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school--staff, faculty, children. The question is, "What is life in the school like from the perspective of those in the school? We can't understand an institution if this information is left out. More to the point, we won't even be able to identify the sources of its strengths and problems.

A second line of questioning has developed in the 1970's and 1980's. How is the school and its practice linked to other institutions in the society? It is important to know how the federal government, the corporation, and elites interrelate to determine such questions as personnel policy, curriculum decisions, and funding. Who has the power to define educational concepts in the social order? What interest groups are active in educational decision making? What accounts for public education's prodigious resistance to reform? How does the school really function with regard to the issues of equality as contrasted with its stated aims?

Radical sociologists draw from a variety of disciplines in their attempt to get at these questions. Theirs is an advocacy stance toward teachers and children. They seek to understand the fundamental conditions in our society that thwart efforts to teach and to learn. From this perspective it makes no sense to speak of educational research unless we are as teachers, engaged in answering the painful questions we have. It makes no sense to speak of excellence in education unless we first determine under what circumstances we educate at all. Most work in the radical sociological analysis of education is being conducted in England and France. It involves teachers themselves who have combined into research groups to help them understand and change their educational communities. On this view--educational research should best be generated from the classroom and out of the problems of teachers and students. Educational theory is in deep need of this kind of inquiry. Educational research conducted in universities is not without merit, but our mistake has geen to grant it a privileged position.

In conclusion, I would say that educational sociologists have taken a protest position with regard to our customary ways of generating and communicating sociological knowledge. Their work serves to question our beliefs about the uses and ownership of "research." Their audience includes the very groups to be studied in order to enhance their own goals in education.

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January, 1984

PROGRESS TOWARD EXCELLENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

by Joseph R. Ellis

I know of no one who is closely involved with systematic educational inquiry who would contend that, however defined, a state of excellence has been achieved in either educational research or educational evaluation. Conversely, I know of no one who would deny that important progress has been made during the past thirty-five years toward excellence in the methodology and techiques of educational research and evaluation. In the following paragraphs I have attempted to call attention to what I consider to be some of the areas in which important methodological and technical progress has occurred and to provide a brief sketch of some of the developments in these areas.

Lastly, I would like to call the reader's attention to what I consider to be a needed event in the field of education. I refer to an educational malpractice suit in which the defendant, a teacher, counselor or administrator, loses and is assessed significant damages. I realize that to advocate such an event sounds somewhat perverse; however, this kind of hard medicine may be both needed and justified if education in the United States is to be accelerated toward excellence.

Areas of Progress in Educational Research/Evaluation

1. Attitudes toward educational research and evaluation appear to be more favorable than at the middle of this century. While the debate over whether teaching is an "art or a science" has not been resolved, the application of the method of science to educational problems and evaluation has been increasingly accepted by decision makers at all levels and has made inroads into territory previously held exclusively by the "art" forces. Even so, it would appear that self interests, indifference and negative feelings about scientific inquiry in education remains a major constraint to the achievement of excellence in educational research and evaluation.

2. The scope of inquiry in education has broadened during the past thirty-five years to challenge many untested assumptions and to encompass many more and different kinds of programs, practices, policies, pupils, products and

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professional personnel. Educational accountability and auditing have been accepted in more settings, measurable objectives and means for evaluating them have been widely applied, and the results of formative and summative evaluations used increasingly to modify educational efforts. Models for conducting these inquiries and applying their results have evolved during the past thirty-five years. Even so, it is my impression that a large segment of American eduation is not significantly involved in or influenced by these inquiry developments.

3. Data collection (instrumentation, measurement, appraisal) is an area of considerable progress. During the last thirty-five years refinement and imprvement of older "paper and pencil" instruments was a constant activity as was the development of instruments to gather data from a broader scope of behaviors and products. The assignment of behavior to taxonomies (affective, cognitive, and psychomotor) gave direction to measurement developments and general inquiry. One might even consider it to be a sign of progress when established and heretofore unquestioned educational tests were challenged and found to be less valid, reliable, and appropriate than previously thought. I refer to both measures of human intelligence and performance.

Competency based education called for new techniques of evaluation. Modern technology, especially from the field of electronics, was adapted for use in data gathering and analysis previously not available in the study of human behavior. However, the difficulties of establishing validity and reliability persists for many instruments and procedures used to gather educational data. This, then, appears to pose a major constraint to achieving excellence.

4. Data analysis is an area of marked achievement during the past thirty-five years. The development and/or refinement of statistical techniques has provided an excellent means for quantitative analyses of much of the data sought in educational inquiry. The evolution of the electronic computer has provided a means for processing speedily, easily, and accurately massive amounts of data. Perhaps the researcher's immagination is the only major constraint to progress in this area.

5. Dissemination of research and evaluation results in the field of education is an area of considerable progress. The number and quality of professional print materials reporting research/evaluation findings has increased several fold as has the coverage provided by non-professional print publications. The various computer data bases, especially the **Educational Resources Information Centers** (ERIC), serve dissemination functions in ways unthought of in 1950.

Both pre-service and in-service courses, conferences, and workshops for educators increasingly

disseminate research/evaluation results. Demonstrations of results often are provided by validated programs individually, or as a part of diffusion networks. Visitations and consultations implement models for change that are based on research/evaluation results. The application of new technologies in the audio-visual field and computer science have been adapted for purposes of the dissemination of the results of educational research/evaluation. This has occurred in formal professional activities and by the public and private broadcast media. Perhaps the greatest constraint to progress in this area is the temptation to disseminate results that are not warranted by the inquiry report.

6. Application of results of research/evaluation, while considerably more prevalent than thirty-five years ago, still lags behind the production of knowledge. Major constraints to progress in this area appear to be customs and traditions which do not require educators to base their theories, policies and practices on the results of scientifically based knowledge. Also, indifference, self-interest or the lack of interest, or the lack of adequate valid research/evaluation data pose a major constraint. Until greater consideration of research/evaluation results is practiced in educational decision making, excellence will be precluded in educational research and evaluation.

7. Preparation of professional educators has increasingly provided research based knowledge and experiences, especially at the graduate level, where one or more courses are usually completed in research methods, tests and measurement, evaluation, and statistics. The vast increase in the proportion and number of educators with graduate degrees assures a much more research knowledgable group of educators than ever before in this country.

Many educators have become specialists in the areas of educational research and evaluation and, while located mostly in colleges and universities, they practice throughout the profession in special projects, local school districts, and state education agencies. Their special publications and organizations have proliferated and serve as an influential force in education.

A major constraint to the achievement of excellence in this area is the continuing lack of communication, cooperation, and trust between specialists in educational research and evaluation and the practitioners in the schools. The concept of "action" research would appear to provide an avenue to reduce this gap; however, after nearly thirty years since its conception,"action" research remains a little used practice in education.

Needed Efforts for Progress Toward Excellence in Educational Research and Evaluation

1. Efforts and needed resources should be applied to reduce the constraints indicated above. Obviously, excellence in this area depends on many factors including: (1) a respect and desire for valid data upon which to build educational theory and conduct educational practice; (2) honest, objective, and open inquiry across the range of education; (3) relevant, complete, valid, and reliable data; (4) data made interpretable, meaningful, and useful through appropriate analysis and dissemination to appropriate public and professional users; (5) the adequate preparation of persons to produce and consume educational knowledge generated by the application of the scientific method; (6) narrowing the gap between research based knowledge about educational theory and practice and what is done to further education; and (7) creating an atmosphere throught education that encourages openness and inquiry and diminishes fear and distrust.

2. An event which has not happened but which, in my view, has the potential for accelerating progress toward excellence in educational research and educational evaluation, and indeed may have a profound impact on the way eduation is provided in the United States, would be an educational malpractice suit won by the plaintiff. If the defendant in such a suit were to be assessed and required to pay significant damages because of the failure to base practice on scientific-based knowledge, the fields of educational research and evaluation would assume an importance not yet ascribed to them. Furthermore, the push for excellence in educational inquiry would be mandated.

An event such as I refer to here is hard medicine, but it may in the long run further professional accountability and require excellence in educational research and evaluation as well as overall educational practice.

END

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